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AN ADDRESS TO THE FOSSIL BONES IN A PRIVATE
MUSEUM.

BY JAMES S. LIPPINCOTT.

“And you have walked about—how strange a story!”

In days gone by, a million years or so,
When giant saurians were in all their glory
In the dim twilight of the long ago!
When Hadrosaurus reared his height stupendous,
And Aquilunguine Lælaps leaped tremendous!

Could ye but speak, what stories you could tell us!

How on the oozy flats you floundered free;
Elasmosaur and all his scaly fellows

That fished and paddled the Cretaceous sea,
And Mosasaurus, how he showed his tushes
Ages ere Moses boated 'mong the rushes!

That “there were giants in those days” is certain,

Not such as those by Scripture story told,
Nor known to us till science raised the curtain,
Their length and breadth and stature to unfold;
Monsters of flesh and bone and horny mail,
And jaws and claws and ponderous length of tail.

Oft have we queried, wherefore had ye birth,

And wherefore sent into a world like this
Ages ere perfect man appeared on earth?

As told in chapter first of Genesis,
Of which our Savans have not yet been able
To show how much is fact, how much is fable!

The “dark idolator of chance” may learn

A lesson pregnant from your gray remains,
See proof of plans, deep-laid, he may not spurn,
By Power Creative, through all time the same;
See glimpses of the slow evolving plan
Developing the monad up to man.

Then hail your advent to the light of day!

A revelation of old time to this,
Along the darkened past a brilliant ray
Lighting an else unfathomable abyss!
And hail to him whose skill your import can make plain,
Can reconstruct the past and make it live again!

REPLY TO J. S. L.

My dearest cousin, several times removed,
Since you have called me from the vasty deep
To witness how our race has been improved,
Pray hear my answer ere you go to sleep.

And first I hold that it is not polite,
To call relations by such horrid names
As Hadro-mosa-sauri, which excite
Suspicion of the justness of your claims.

You seem in fact to have ransacked your brains
To find some endless word to suit my bones,
I'll take some little pity on your pains,
And tell you plainly that "my name is Jones!"

And I was born so very long before
Your puny race appeared upon the earth,
That human fancy ne'er may hope to soar
Back to the bygone age which saw my birth.

That to each other we have not been known,
Is owing to your most egregious fault;
For this confounded piece of marly stone,
Has served for ages for my burial vault.

Your ancient Scripture cannot be so old
Or nigh as perfect as this mass of rocks,
In which the patient seeker may behold
Foundations of a faith most orthodox.

It is not treating me as I deserve
To end the monad series with a man,
Presumption founded on some extra nerve
Which you possess, does not destroy the plan.

Be warned in time lest overbearing pride
May be the chief occasion of your fall,
Let future beings 'twixt us both decide,
Which was the master and which was the thrall.

Farewell! my voice is now forever hushed,
No more to be evoked by prose or rhyme;
The hue of health which once my temples flushed
Has changed to that of carbonate of lime!
Farewell! at least until the end of time.